

Application Serial No.: 09/932,930
Reply to Office Action dated September 25, 2003

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of delivering a target object onto a transfer mechanism for allowing said transfer mechanism to take the target object from a plurality of lift pins, comprising the steps of:

 inclining the target object by making one end of the target object disposed on a table higher than the other end wherein the target object is inclined such that a transfer-mechanism-approaching [[a]] side of the target object is higher than an opposite side, and a lower end of the target object is prevented from coming into contact with a surface of the table;

 moving the transfer mechanism into a space between the table and the target object, and allowing the transfer mechanism to pick up the target object from below; and

 allowing the transfer mechanism to hold said **inclined** target object.

2. (Original) The delivering method according to claim 1, wherein a part of the target object is allowed to rise from the surface of the table so as to provide air between the target object and the table in the step of inclining the target object.

3. (Original) The delivering method according to claim 1, wherein the step of inclining the target object comprises the sub-steps of:

 making one end of the target object higher than the other end so as to allow the target object to have a predetermined inclination; and

 moving upward the target object to a predetermined height while maintaining the inclination.

4. (Original) The delivering method according to claim 1, wherein the step of inclining the target object comprises the sub-steps of:

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moving upward the target object to a predetermined height in parallel to the surface of the table; and

making one end of the target object higher than the other end so as to incline the target object.

5. (Original) The delivering method according to claim 1, wherein the target object is inclined such that the other end of the target object is brought out of contact with the table in the step of inclining the target object.

6. (Original) The delivering method according to claim 1, wherein the target object is a semiconductor wafer, said predetermined processing is an inspection of the electrical characteristics of the integrated circuit formed on the semiconductor wafer, and said transfer mechanism is a pincette for transferring the semiconductor wafer.

7. (Original) The delivering method according to claim 6, wherein the step of inclining the target object of the semiconductor wafer is performed by controlling the height to which each of a plurality of lift pins for supporting the semiconductor wafer, which are arranged in an upper portion of the table, is moved.

8. (Original) The delivering method according to claim 7, wherein the step of inclining the target object comprises the sub-steps of:

moving upward at least one lift pin at a predetermined speed so as to cause a part of the target object to rise from the surface of the table, thereby introducing air into the clearance between the target object and the table; and

moving upward each of the lift pins at a speed higher than said predetermined speed so as to move upward the target object.

9-11. (Cancel)

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12. (Currently Amended) ~~The A~~ table mechanism according to claim 10, for receiving the target object transferred by a transfer mechanism, for applying a predetermined processing to the received target object, and for delivering the processed target object onto the transfer mechanism, comprising:

a table having the target object disposed thereon and provided with a plurality of lift pins in an upper portion thereof, said lift pins being moved upward from within the table onto the outside of the table when receiving the target object transferred by said transfer mechanism and when delivering the processed target object onto said transfer mechanism;
a driving mechanism for vertically moving said plural lift pins; and
a control mechanism for controlling said driving mechanism, said control mechanism moving upward at least one of said lift pins to a position higher than the positions to which the other lift pins are moved upward, when the processed target object is delivered from the table onto the transfer mechanism, so as to incline the target object supported by said plural lift pins,

wherein the control of the driving mechanism performed by the control mechanism of the table mechanism is performed such that the target object is moved upward in parallel to the surface of the table to reach a predetermined height, and that one end of the target object is made higher than the other end so as to incline the target object.

13-16. (Cancel)

17. (Previously Presented) A method of delivering a target object onto a transfer mechanism for allowing said transfer mechanism to take the target object from a plurality of lift pins, comprising the steps of:

inclinig the target object by making one end of the target object disposed at a table

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higher than the other end, the other end being supported by one of the table and at least one of the lift pins, wherein the target object is inclined such that a transfer mechanism approaching side of the target object is higher than an opposite side and a lower end of the target object is prevented from coming into contact with a surface of the table,

moving the transfer mechanism into a space between the table and the target object, and allowing the transfer mechanism to pick up the target object from below; and allowing the transfer mechanism to hold said inclined target object.

18. (Cancel)